

We claim:

1. A communication network, comprising:

a plurality of server devices for providing a plurality of services to the network,  
where each service has a corresponding service address, and

5 at least one client device that accesses services by first accessing a service point map  
listing of services available on the network and corresponding address information for each  
service.

2. The communication network of claim 1 further comprising a service point map  
10 manager device to intermittently generate a current service point map identifying the services  
and corresponding address information for services connected to the network, where each  
server device sends corresponding address information for each service to the service point  
map manager device and each client device collects a service point map from the service  
point map manager device when the client connects to the network.

15 3. The communication network of claim 2, wherein the a service point map manager  
device selects services and corresponding service address information for inclusion in the  
service point map using server load balancing techniques.

20 4. The communication network of claim 3, wherein server load balancing techniques are  
implemented by supplying a service point map to the client that has already been processed  
for load balancing wherein all entries have been removed except for targeted address  
information.

5. The communication network of claim 3, wherein server load balancing techniques are implemented by supplying a service point map to the client that contains all possible entries, where the entry for any service which needs load balancing contains script code in a service specific data field which the client runs in order to select the appropriate entry.

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6. The communication network of claim 2, wherein the a service point map manager device selects services and corresponding service address information for inclusion in the service point map based on the topographical location of the client device in the network.

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7. The communication network of claim 1, wherein the service point map includes supplemental service identification data comprising a client epoch value for at least a first service identified in the service point map that is used to correlate the performance of the client device and the first service.

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8. The communication network of claim 7, wherein a first service has a corresponding service epoch value, whereby the first service causes the client device to take corrective action at the time that a mismatch is detected between the client epoch value and the service epoch value using executable commands embedded in the service point map.

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9. The communication network of claim 1, wherein a first service causes the client device to perform actions using executable commands in the service point map.

10. The communication network of claim 1, wherein the service point map includes backup address information for a selected service identified in the service point map in the event that the selected service cannot be reached.

5 11. The communication network of claim 10, wherein the backup address information comprises address information for a service point map manager device.

12. The communication network of claim 10, wherein the backup address information comprises address information for an alternate server providing the selected service.

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13. In a client/server communication network wherein a plurality of services are located on a plurality of servers connected to the network, a server computer system for generating a table listing of services connected to the network and corresponding location information for each listed service, where the table listing is selected from a larger listing of services  
15 connected to the network using a first partitioning scheme.

14. The server computer system of claim 13, wherein the server computer system regularly generates the table listing of services based on current service topology.

20 15. The server computer system of claim 13, further comprising a plurality of client computer systems connected to the network, each of which collects a table listing of services from the server computer system upon connecting to the network.

16. The server computer system of claim 13, wherein the first partitioning scheme is a functional partitioning of the services.

17. The server computer system of claim 13, further comprising at least one client  
5 computer system that has identification data associated with the client and that has requested a table listing from the server computer system, wherein the first partitioning scheme is routing of services based on the identification data associated with the client.

18. The server computer system of claim 13, wherein the first partitioning scheme is to  
10 partition the services by resource connection.

19. The server computer system of claim 13, wherein the first partitioning scheme is to partition the services by equivalency.

20. A method for a client process to access a plurality of services provided by a plurality  
15 of servers over a computer network using a dynamic service point map, comprising:

connecting the client process to the computer network,

transferring a dynamic service point map to the client process from a first server  
device, wherein the dynamic service point map comprises a listing of a first plurality of  
20 services and corresponding location information for each of the first plurality of services, and

connecting the client process to a service listed in the dynamic service point map  
using the corresponding location information contained in the dynamic service point map.

21. The method of claim 20 further comprising:

generating location information for a server on which a service is provided, and  
publishing the location information to the first server device for inclusion in the  
dynamic service point map.

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22. The method of claim 20 further comprising transferring an updated dynamic service  
point map to the client process upon any failure of the client process to connect to a service  
listed in the dynamic service point map.

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